Tamil TIMES

Vol IV No.9 | 65p | JULY 1985

TAMIL TIMES

ISSN 0266-4488

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

UK/India/Sri Lanka £7.50
All other countries ..... £15/US$24

Published monthly by
TAMIL TIMES LTD
P.O. BOX 304
London W13 9QN
United Kingdom

CONTENTS

The Bhutan Talks..... 1,3,4 & 7
Editorial 2
Why Rajiv Gandhi's solution is unworkable 5
Refusal of asylum to Tamil refugee quashed..... 6
The Massacre before Ceasefire..... 7
Hartal in Jaffna & Vavuniya..... 7
Trinco deal fizzles out 8
Mathew's Myths exploded 9
Tamil Refugees in W. Europe 10
What Others Say 11
Sri Lanka – the Federal Alternative 12,13
Letters to the Editor..... 14
Tamils are under threat..... 15
Tamil Travails – Sukhran's Diary..... 16,17
A True Scholar..... 18
Quotable Quotes 19
Prof E.F.C. Ludowyk: obituary 20

Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor or the publishers.
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Printed By Astmoor Litho (TU) Ltd,
21-22 Arkwright Road, Runcorn, Cheshire.

THE BHUTAN TALKS

BEFORE & AFTER

Only a congenital optimist would have expected a successful outcome from the talks held at Thimpu in the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan between the Sri Lankan government delegation and the representatives of the Tamil militant groups and the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). The talks, which lasted from July 8 to 12, were deadlocked but the parties agreed to meet again on August 12.

But what is significant is that the talks in fact took place. For, only a few weeks earlier, the President of Sri Lanka and the garrulous Minister of National Security, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, had vowed that they would not sit with the Tamil 'terrorists' for talks. They were confident of a military victory over the Tamil militants.

The Anuradhapura massacre (May 14) in which over 150 Sinhalese civilians died, created a shock reaction among political and the hitherto arrogantly confident Buddhist clerical circles. The initial shock was followed by a mounting wave of criticism of the inability of the government to handle the security situation. Influential sections of the Buddhist clergy led by the Mahanayake (Bishop) of the Asgirya chapter, while demanding a direct role for the clergy on security matters, called upon the government to seek the assistance of the Indian government and commence talks with the Tamils, including the Tamil militant groups. The hitherto politically dormant opposition seized the opportunity to mount an anti-government campaign and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) of the former Prime Minister, Mrs S. Bandaranaike, sought to jump on the bandwagon of the increasingly vocal Buddhist clergy.

Besieged & desperate

President Jayawardene for once felt besieged and desperate. Not knowing what to do, he threatened to declare martial law and announced his intention to delegate executive powers to Members of Parliament. To the Tamil people, martial law would have meant no difference for they had been living under a de facto martial law regime in the northern and eastern provinces during the previous 18 months. But the President's proposals sent shock waves amongst the opposition parties in the South.

It was in this background that Rajiv Gandhi invited President Jayawardene to New Delhi. From February, India had been attempting to persuade the government of Sri Lanka to commence direct talks with the Tamil militant groups. Details of what transpired at the summit between Rajiv and Jayawardene on June 2 were not released but the joint communique issued after the summit recognised the need for a de-escalation of tension and violence with a view to creating an atmosphere conducive to negotiations. From what transpired later, it became clear that Jayawardene had expressed agreement to an Indian proposal for a ceasefire between the Tamil militant groups and the Sri Lankan security forces. On the other hand, Rajiv was to 'influence' the Tamil militants to consent to a ceasefire and subsequent talks. In turn, Jayawardene was willing to submit proposals for substantial devolution of power to the Tamils.

Although it was not apparent immediately following the summit between Rajiv and Jayawardene, it is now obvious that India had agreed to openly adopt certain positions in regard to the Tamil question. These positions became clearer as weeks passed when Rajiv declared that India did not support a separate state of Eelam in Sri Lanka and that, while India would not accept any solution which compromised the liberty of Sri Lankan Tamils, it did not expect the Tamil areas to be given powers more than what an Indian state possessed The latest speech made by Rajiv in Madras on July 16 makes this position of India quite unambiguous.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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Tamil TIMES

THE CRUCIAL ISSUES

The much-publicised talks at Thimpu in Bhutan between the delegates of the Sri Lankan government and those of the five Tamil militant groups and the TULF have been adjourned to be resumed next month. It would appear that the proposals put forward by the government team were so inadequate, they were rejected outright by the Tamil delegates. Even a last-minute dash from New Delhi to Thimpu by the Indian Foreign Minister, Romesh Bandhari, could not break the deadlock. We are not surprised.

If those at the helm in Sri Lanka are sincere and serious about a negotiated political solution to the ethnic conflict in that country, it is no good sending a team of lawyers and bureaucrats, however distinguished they may be, with predetermined and predefined parameters for 'devolution of power' or for setting up units of so-called grassroot democracy. That would be a wholly inappropriate and wrong approach. The problem in Sri Lanka is not whether there is grassroot democracy or not. It is a crisis arising from the unresolved national question.

Before one can discuss constitutional arrangements or units of devolution, it is essential to diagnose the political disease by establishing certain facts.

The Tamils, including the Tamil-speaking Muslims, perceive themselves as an oppressed people and this oppression has been carried out by successive governments representing or purporting to represent the interests of the majority Sinhala community. And this perception of oppression is not without justification.

One million people working in the tea plantations were arbitrarily deprived of their nationality, citizenship and franchise, only because they were Tamils. The enactment of Sinhala as the sole official language of the country constituted a denial of equal linguistic rights of the Tamil speaking people. The Tamil people were treated as a separate people when ethnicity became a criterion for discriminatory recruitment to employment and admission to institutions of advanced learning. Equally, the areas of the north and east of the country in which the Tamils predominantly lived were subjected to discriminatory treatment in that they were deprived of provision for economic and industrial development. Most importantly, the policy and practice of state-aided colonisation of traditional Tamil areas of the north and east by Sinhalese was designed to undermine the numerical strength of the Tamils in those areas. The recent attempt by the government to settle Sinhalese in those areas to reflect the nationwide population ratio of 75% Sinhalese to 25% other minorities is demonstrably intended to destroy the Tamil national identity. That the regime in Sri Lanka had ceased to be a government of all the people and that it had transformed itself into a government of, by and for the Sinhala majority only became publicly obvious when it recently provided arms and training for use of such arms to the Sinhalese living in Tamil areas.

That the forces of 'law and order' of the Sri Lankan state failed to protect Tamil lives and property during periods of widespread anti-Tamil violence is a fact. That they in fact colluded and even participated in acts of mass murder and arson is not in dispute. That an essentially Sinhala army and police force is employed to terrorise and commit atrocities against the mass of the Tamil people has been well-documented by independent observers. That successive governments have regarded themselves as protectors of Sinhala-Buddhist interests as against those of other communities is also incontrovertible. That too many Sinhalese people, if not all of them, have participated, permitted or tolerated repeated violence against Tamils and their property is also a sad fact.

In short, the Tamils are an oppressed people and that oppression has been perpetrated in the name of the Sinhala people, who, by and large, have supported the policies of such oppression. It is in the context of this national oppression, the Tamil people began to assert their status as a nation and their struggle for national self-determination commenced.

If the Tamil people are now asked to abdicate their right to national self-determination through the establishment of a separate state of their own, and a solution is sought within the territorial boundaries of a single Sri Lankan state, then it is imperative that certain principles and rights are recognised and accepted as axiomatic and they be constitutionally entrenched and implemented in day-to-day practice.

Firstly, the notion that Sri Lanka is a Sinhala-Buddhist country must give way to the recognition that it is a country of three distinct nationalities, although speaking two languages — the Sinhalese, the Tamils and the Muslims.

Secondly, the basic rights of these nationalities shall be regarded as inalienable and inviolate.

Thirdly, the secular character of the Sri Lankan state must be guaranteed by the equal treatment of all religions.

Fourthly, the fact that the Sinhala people have lived predominantly and traditionally in the seven provinces other than the north and east, must be recognised. Equally, the fact that the Tamil speaking people, including the Muslims, have lived in the northern and eastern provinces must also be accepted. The inevitable corollary to this recognition is that no organised attempt by way of transfer of population for what-

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FROM PAGE 1

Peace formula

The ceasefire which came into operation on June 18 was part of an elaborately worked out formula drawn up by New Delhi. To what extent Colombo was involved in drawing up this 'peace formula' is uncertain. But what became obvious was that the Tamil militant groups were faced with a fait accompli presented by New Delhi. The militant groups had scored remarkable successes against the Sri Lankan security forces in the immediately preceding period. Only a month earlier they had completely destroyed the biggest police headquarters in northern Jaffna and exacted heavy casualties from the security forces in other areas. While the armed forces were indiscriminately killing non-combatant civilian Tamils in reprisal, the militants were scoring direct hits even in areas considered to be Sinhala heartlands. This was a situation in which the militants would have least wanted a 'ceasefire'. Apparently, New Delhi gave them no choice.

A press release of the Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF), an umbrella organisation of four Tamil militant groups, said that the Front 'appreciating the mediatory role and the good offices of the Government of India and accepting the assurances offered to us, agreed to suspend all hostilities and to observe a ceasefire for a stipulated time to help create a congenial atmosphere and to help the government of Sri Lanka to put forward a concrete package of proposals for our consideration between the 10th and 12th weeks of the ceasefire'.

Rajiv bails out Sri Lanka

The ceasefire could not have come at a better time for Sri Lanka. In fact it is being suggested that Sri Lanka manoeuvred the announcement of the ceasefire for June 18 for a more important reason. Finance Minister Ronni de Mel was to be in Paris on June 20 at a meeting of the Sri Lanka Aid Consortium which was to decide what Sri Lanka was going to receive in the forthcoming year. Last year, two factors helped to convince the donor countries and the World Bank to give continued financial support for Sri Lanka. The unexpected boom in tea prices mainly due to a cut in export of tea by India enabled Sri Lanka to show a balance of payment surplus of over 200 million dollars. More importantly, the All Party Conference was still in progress in July 1984 and Ronni de Mel promised a political solution which would restore political and economic stability in the country.

'This time round, with tea prices tumbling and the defence spending rising to Rs7 billion from Rs1 billion, pledges of official aid were vital with over half the overall budget deficit being foreign financed and ratio of commercial borrowing and debt servicing rising fast. The ceasefire, already operative when de Mel made his pitch, was Sri Lanka's only hope of convincing the sceptical donors of the need for continued aid', ('India Today', 15,7,85). In the event the Aid Consortium agreed to grant Sri Lanka 860 million dollars.

India and Rajiv had bailed out Jayawardene at his most vulnerable. India, the 'Big Bully' only a few months earlier, was now being hailed as the 'Big Brother' even by those whose political sustenance depended on nourishment from habitual anti-Indian xenophobia.

The four phases

The 'peace formula' sponsored by New Delhi envisaged four phases of implementation. It provided for a specific time frame for de-escalation of violence, secret talks and eventual political settlement:

Phase 1 **would last for three weeks from June 18, the date the plan began to take effect. It would involve certain major steps on the side of the Sri Lankan government — lifting the restrictive legislation on road and vehicle movement and suspending enforcement of the prohibited zone, suspending the new settlements in the Tamil areas, carrying out cordon and**

PLEASE TURN OVER

ever purpose be undertaken which will have the effect of changing the demographic composition of these areas. This should be regarded as essential for the preservation and promotion of the national and cultural identities of the respective nationalities.

Fifthly, all the people settled in Sri Lanka and their offspring should be entitled to equal rights of nationality, citizenship and franchise.

Sixthly, the two major languages of the country, Sinhala and Tamil, should be declared national languages. Tamil should be made the language of administration in the northern and eastern provinces and Sinhala as the language of administration in the other seven provinces, provided, however, every person in Sri Lanka should have the right to use either Sinhala or Tamil to transact business with public institutions and receive a reply in that language.

An agreement upon these crucial issues is a pre-requisite for any lasting political solution. These are essentially matters for political decision and not those for lawyers or bureaucrats. Can those who wield political power in Sri Lanka summon the necessary courage, confidence and statesmanship to rise to the occasion and seize the opportunity to arrive at a political settlement? We shall wait and see.

CONGRATS FOR I.C.J.

The International Commission of Jurists have performed an enormous service to the cause of human rights under the Rule of Law. In January this year they received their reward. They were awarded the much coveted Wateler Peace Prize, a prize normally given to a person or institution who or which has 'rendered valuable service to the cause of peace'.

Under the leadership of its veteran Secretary-General, Niall MacDermot, the ICJ as a recognised United Nations Non-Governmental Organisation, has a proud record of pursuing a relentless campaign against human rights violations in various states. This has made the ICJ an inevitable target for malevolent attacks by governments. For instance, the Sri Lankan delegation which attended the UN Human Rights Commission in February this year, subjected the ICJ to a vitriolic attack for highlighting the indiscriminate extra-judicial killing of Tamil civilians and gross abuse of human rights by the Sri Lankan security forces.

We have no doubt that the ICJ will not be daunted by criticism from puny men in high places. We congratulate the ICJ on winning the Wateler Peace Prize.

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FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

search operations only in the presence of local officials and magistrates, and lifting the surveillance zone. The reciprocal steps for this phase by the militants would include ending the use of the prohibited zone as a staging area for carrying men and material, ceasing attacks on civilians and on government offices, economic targets and private property, and stopping the induction of men and material from outside the island.

***Phase II*, which would also last three weeks, would mean the security forces suspending curfews and also raids and searches; on their part, the militants would cease attacks on convoys of security forces and stop mining roads, railways and bridges and carrying arms.**

***Phase III* would last two weeks. This would mean a full-fledged ceasefire on both sides — the major feature of this phase would be the declaration of amnesty and the release from custody of all against whom charges had not been filed. (Successful discussions would bring the release of those against whom charges have been filed.)**

***Phase IV* provided for secret talks on substantial issues for reaching a political settlement to take place between the emissaries of the government and representatives of the Tamil political leadership and Tamil militant groups. The venue of these talks could be a third country acceptable to both sides. Every effort should be made to maintain the secrecy of these talks and in any case, of the course of the discussions. The search for a solid foundation for a political solution must be complete within three months from the date of the ceasefire. Depending on the result of these secret talks, open and direct dialogue between the government and the representatives of the Tamils can commence, as soon as the necessary groundwork is considered to have been laid.**

It would be apparent that 'secret talks on substantive issues for reaching a political settlement' should take place only during the Phase IV stage, that is some eight weeks after the ceasefire came into operation — June 18 and after an amnesty had been announced.

Phases telescoped

As it turned out, the time schedule and the steps to be taken by the parties on a progressive phase by phase basis were not followed. The fixing of the Thimpu talks for July 8 amounted to a telescoping of the whole process of de-escalation and negotiation covered by all four phases. The reasons for this breach of the agreed formula have not been made clear. However, it is obvious that New Delhi and Colombo had come to some understanding on this matter without prior consultation with the Tamil militant groups.

The ENLF reacted with their 'collective proposed peace conference to be held in Bhutan'. The reason they gave was that the Sri Lankan armed forces were guilty of 'serious violations of the ceasefire agreement'. The ENLF statement added:

'Sri Lankan armed forces were continuing military atrocities by harassing and slaughtering innocent Tamil civilians. It alleged that tension and terror prevailed in Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts as army, navy and police commandos carried out midnight raids, plundering Tamil houses, assaulting Tamils and raping women. Youths had been killed in Mannar, Murunken and Muthur areas and their bodies burnt to erase identity.'

Representations made to New Delhi by the Tamil groups in an attempt to get the talks postponed proved unsuccessful. The TULF and PLOT agreed to attend the talks and in the event the ENLF also consented. As in the case of the 'ceasefire', New Delhi would appear to have 'whipped' the Tamil groups into line for the Thimpu talks.

Every move by New Delhi indicated its determination to keep up the tempo of expectation of a political solution through a timely commencement of discussions before some untoward incident shattered the shaky and fragile ceasefire. Through past experience, New Delhi was too aware of the unpredictable behaviour of Jayawardene's regime which had time and time again proved its vulnerability to hardline Sinhala-Buddhist political and clerical pressure. Before this pressure built itself up, India wanted action and it hoped that something positive would result when the Sri Lankan government and Tamil delegates met face to face at Thimpu on July 8.

Whatever may have been the hopes and intentions of the Indian government, it was clear from the start that very little progress was possible at Thimpu.

Hotbed of intrigue

The Sri Lankan team, composed of lawyers and bureaucrats headed by the President's brother, Mr Hector Jayawardene, did not include even one politican of standing. Not that any single Minister of the Jayawardene regime would have been prepared to stick his neck out. The ruling party has become a hotbed of intrigue and counter-intrigue in which the leading pretenders to the throne of the aging President, Prime Minister Premadasa and National Security Minister Athulathmudali, are playing their parts in such a manner so as not to hurt themselves in the struggle for succession.

Negotiations for the ethnic conflict would inevitably mean conceding to the Tamils certain rights which they are presently deprived of and no Sinhalese politician in Sri Lanka who wants to be at the top would bargain to do that for fear of being immediately dubbed and denounced as a traitor to the Sinhala race. The Sri Lankan team composed therefore of all President's men, also included Mr G.V.P. Samarasinghe, 'known for his dislike of communists, Tamils and Indians', and who had always favoured a military solution.

If ever there was a take-over by the military in Sri Lanka, the inevitable choice of a head to give it a civilian character would fall on Mr Samarasinghe who presently enjoys the twin positions of being the Presidential Secretary and Cabinet Secretary. There was little possibility that there would have been a rational aproach to the Tamil problem with him playing an important role in the Sri Lankan team.

Except for the TULF which fielded its President and Secretary-General, the Tamil militant groups sent a 'junior team' for the talks, which reportedly lasted four hours each day from July 8 to 12.

Although the talks were meant to be secret and without preconditions, the Sri Lankan President let it be known through the media to what extent he was prepared to go.

'Jayawardene emphasised that his proposal did not envisage any link between Eastern Province and Northern Province, the two provinces Tamils in Sri Lanka describe as their traditional homeland. He further emphasised that he would not agree to it even now. However, he said that matters such as provincial co-ordination councils' financial powers, their control of administrative services including the police and such other issues were negotiable' ('Far Eastern Economic Review', 27.6.85).

Old proposals in new trappings

By agreeing to go to Bhutan, voluntarily or otherwise, it was apparent that the Tamil groups had in fact come down from their previous non-negotiable demand for an independent sovereign state of Eelam. One would have expected the Sri Lankan government, if it was serious and sincere, to seize the opportunity by offering something substantial to the Tamils to match such a climbdown on the part of the militants. Instead, the Sri Lankan team had put forward proposals which went no further than those placed last year before the ill-fated All Party Conference. Without confronting the underlying issues for the ethnic con-

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 7

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WHY RAJIV GANDHI'S SOLUTION FOR SRI LANKA IS UNWORKABLE: THE ALTERNATIVE

Professor A. Jeyaratnam Wilson

Mr Rajiv Gandhi has declared that the Tamils should not expect a separate state or a federal state but something like India has. India can be transformed into a unitary state in times of crisis. This means the imposition of the authority of the central government. An internal crisis can always be manufactured and Sri Lanka's Sinhala Buddhist governments can always be depended on to do anything and everything against Tamil interests. Asok Chanda, a former Comptroller and Auditor-General of India stated in his 'Federalism of India' (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1965), that 'India is not a federal state. In the final analysis, it is a unitary state in concept and operation . . .' (p.124). Given the past history of Sinhala-Tamil relations and recent events, there is little purpose even in conceiving of an Indian-style remedy for the Tamils of Sri Lanka. In the case of India, a long history of liberal traditions has been maintained in working parliamentary processes. The independence of the judiciary has always been upheld and respected in India.

The features in the Indian system that operate in favour of a centralised unitary state are:

(1) the Parliament of India can alter the boundaries of states or abolish a state by the ordinary process of legislation. There is no requirement that such a drastic change should be passed in the way that an amendment to the Indian constitution must be enacted.

(2) when an emergency is proclaimed, the Indian Parliament can 'make laws for the whole or any part of the territory of India with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the State List' (Article 250).

(3) under Article 357 of the Indian constitution, the President of India, when advised by the governor of a state, who is in fact the representative of the central government, may assume all the executive functions of the state and declare the powers of the state legislature to be under the authority of the Indian Parliament.

(4) Article 256 of the Indian constitution empowers the central government to direct a state government 'to ensure compliance with laws made by the Parliament of India' and if the state government does not comply, the President of India can declare a state of emergency and assume the powers of the state government.

(5) finally, India's second chamber, the Rajya Sabha, can under Article 249 pass a law by a two-thirds majority indicating that it is necessary or expedient that the Indian Parliament can make laws for a temporary period on any subject on which a state has the constitutional right to legislate. The Sri Lanka second chamber will always have a majority of Sinhala Buddhists and can be depended upon to enact such laws at the request of a Sinhala Buddhist government.

The fact of the matter, however, is that successive Indian governments have acknowledged India's diversity and experts on the Indian constitution such as Paul Appleby in his 'Public Administration in India: Report of a Survey' (New Delhi, Government of India, Cabinet Secretariat, 1953), have remarked that the central government is dependent on the state governments for the administration of national programmes. From Appleby's 'Report', there has emerged the concept of 'co-operative federalism'. The well-known scholar on Indian politics, Professor W.H. Morris Jones in his 'Government and Politics of India' (London, Hutchinson, 1966) has referred to the prevalence of co-operative bargaining' in the Indian system.

Duty to caution

It then becomes the duty of Sri Lanka's Tamil leaders to caution Mr Gandhi and his advisers of the pitfalls that are in the path of Sri Lanka's Tamils if they accepted the Indian system. Soon, even if India were to underwrite the arrangement and monitor the working of the system, the Sinhala Buddhist government will more often than not honour the agreement in the breach. Unlike India, Sri Lanka's bureaucracy is Sinhala-oriented, its political leaders are Sinhala Buddhist-based and the independence of the judiciary in Sri Lanka has had serious inroads made into it.

What can be the solution for the ills that ail Sri Lanka's body politic? A federal system will not be worked satisfactorily. This makes the prospects for an Indian-style quasi-federal system even dimmer. If such a system were imposed on Sri Lanka's Tamils, Mr Gandhi's government may in a short while have to intervene to settle a grimmer and bloodier civil war. The only way out is a settlement based on Annexure 'C' in respect of territorial boundaries. In the relationship between the Sinhalese and Tamil states, there can be an agreement that currency and communications will be dealt with by the Colombo government. Foreign affairs and foreign policy can be conducted by mutually negotiated arrangements. This will mean a variation of Rene Levesque's plans for sovereignty-association between Quebec and the federal government in Ottawa in Canada. Since the President of Sri Lanka is concerned that the borders will encroach upon the Sinhala Buddhists, a 'Congress of New Delhi' comprising the states of South Asia and of ASEAN can guarantee the borders that were originally agreed to by President Jayawardene with the late Mrs Indira Gandhi in Annexure 'C' in 1983.

GOVERNMENT VIOLATES CEASEFIRE

The government of Sri Lanka has been accused of unilaterally violating the 'ceasefire' by establishing two new Commando Units in the Batticaloa area in the Eastern Province. These were set up during the first two weeks of July while the Sri Lankan delegation was meeting Tamil groups for 'peace talks' at Thimpu in Bhutan.

Suspicions raised as to the sincerity of the government in seeking a negotiated political solution would appear to be confirmed by the establishment of these commando operation centres. The question that is being raised by observers is whether the government is using the 'ceasefire' and 'peace talks' as a means to gain time and strengthen and consolidate its armed presence in the Tamil areas.

Residents of the eastern province dread the presence of commandos in their midst because of the role the commandos played in the recent violence that rendered over 50,000 people homeless and hundreds of Tamils lost their lives. Evidence clearly establishes that the violence was instigated, organised and carried out by the commandos trained by ex-SAS mercenaries.

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'END SELECTIVE RESTRICTIONS ON TAMIL ENTRY'

Mr Michael Elliott, British European Member of Parliament (Labour), has tabled the following resolution before the European Parliament with a request for 'topical and urgent' debate:

'The European Parliament,

— Concerned at the plight of the Tamil refugees who are facing possible arrest, persecution, imprisonment and even execution if they are forced to return to Sri Lanka.

— Noting that although many thousands of Tamils are currently seeking refugee status in European countries, less than 1,300 have entered Britain in May.

— Notes with regret the recent decision of the British Government that all Tamils wishing to enter Britain must apply for a visa, a requirement it does not demand from any other Commonwealth citizen.

— Notes with regret that the British Government has restricted to only 24 hours the time within which British MPs can appeal against deportations or removal of Sri Lankan Tamils.

1. Calls on EEC member states to respond sympathetically to the present situation and to grant refugee status generously to those Tamils requesting it.

2. Condemns the actions of the British government as unjust, inhumane and racially discriminatory.

3. Calls on the British government to rescind its new Visa requirements and all other selective restrictions on the entry of Tamil refugees.

4. Calls on the EEC ministers meeting in political co-operation to make representations to the Sri Lankan Government with a view to urging a more tolerant attitude to the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka.

5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council of Ministers, to the Government of Great Britain and of all other EEC Member States, and to the Sri Lankan government.'

'BRITISH AID TO TAMILS'

A new organisation calling itself 'British Aid to Tamils' was launched at a public meeting at Camden Town Hall on 14 June 1985. Many representatives of Afro-Caribbean, Asian and Labour organisations attended. Community leaders and Members of Parliament including Stuart Holland and Jeremy Corbyn spoke at the meeting.

A letter from the president of the Overseas Indian Association in Britain to David Waddington MP calling for his resignation for his treatment of the Tamil refugees seeking asylum in this country was read out and the meeting agreed unanimously to endorse it.

BATT will campaign for:

1. No deportation of Sri Lankan Tamils;
2. No aid to the Sri Lankan government while they continue a policy of repression against the Tamils and the Labour movement of that country;
3. Proper recognition by the British government of the Tamils as political refugees.

A further meeting is being planned in the House of Commons where the question of a national demonstration involving the Labour, Trade Union and community organisations will be discussed.

REFUSAL OF ASYLUM TO TAMIL REFUGEE QUASHED BY JUDGE

A High Court judge recently accused the Home Office of using artificial and inhuman criteria in dealing with applications for political asylum from Tamils fleeing communal violence in Sri Lanka.

Mr Justice Taylor, quashing a ministerial decision to refuse asylum, to a Tamil aged 34, whose identity was withheld for fear of reprisals to his family in Sri Lanka, said it was a startling proposition that the applicant could not qualify for asylum if he and his family had not been singled out for persecution.

The judgement effectively undermines the Home Office policy of granting political asylum only in the most exceptional cases to fleeing Tamils, and was welcomed by the British Refugee Council and bodies who have been pressing for Tamils to be granted temporary refugee status.

Mr David Waddington, Minister of State at the Home Office, stated that all applications were considered thoroughly and sympathetically, but more was required to justify granting asylum than the fact that the man was a Tamil and that there had been civil unrest against the Tamil community. The man appealing to the High Court had not been involved in politics or singled out for harassment.

Unchallenged evidence

The judge said that the decision was contrary to unchallenged evidence that the man and his father had been beaten up and threatened with death and his family's house in Colombo had been attacked and looted by a mob during riots in July 1983.

'It can be of little comfort to a Tamil family to know they are being persecuted as Tamils rather than as individuals,' the judge said.

The British Refugee Council said that Britain had taken many fewer fleeing Tamils than other Western European countries which had no historical links with Sri Lanka. In West Germany, between 15,000 and 20,000 were waiting decisions on applications for asylum; in France there were an estimated 19,000, 3,500 in the Netherlands and 2,500 in Switzerland. Fewer than 2,500 Tamils have arrived in Britain in the past 18 months.

U.S. ACCUSED OF DENYING ASYLUM TO TAMILS

The US Committee for Refugees has accused the US government of 'systematically' turning down the applications of Sri Lankan Tamils for asylum in the country. The Committee is a public information organisation.

In a report on ethnic violence in Sri Lanka, the Committee said the USA had also declined to provide 'extended voluntary departure' for Sri Lankans, a policy at present in force for Afghan, Polish, Ethiopian and Ugandan nationals. Under the policy, a foreign national is allowed to remain temporarily in the USA until the situation in the home country permits his safe return. US immigration officials denied the Committee's charges.

'Not necessary'

An official spokeswoman said the extended voluntary departure policy had not been involved for Sri Lankans because it was not considered necessary at this stage. There was an influx of Sri Lankan Tamils into the USA and 'we are considering applications for asylum on a case by case basis'.

The immigration authorities had about 52 applications to review, nearly all received last year. No applications were received in 1983. 'We are watching the situation in Sri Lanka very carefully and are obviously very concerned.'

She said she was aware that some

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THE MASSACRE BEFORE 'CEASEFIRE'

The Sri-Lankan state-controlled news media proclaimed a big successful 'commando operation' in smashing up a base of Tamil militants at Athimoddai in Mannar on June 14. 'ARMY'S BIGGEST ATTACK ON LTTE CAMP' and 'COMMANDOS DESCRIBE HOW TERRORIST CAMPS WERE DESTROYED' were two of the banner headlines in the ISLAND on two successive days, 17 and 18 June.

The ISLAND of 18 June 1985, spun out its version of the commando operation based on 'intellegence sources'.

'A Major in the Commando Battalion attached to Northern Command Headquarters planned the offensive . . .

'After the plan had been placed before the strike force, they set forth into the jungle with sufficient food and ammunition to last several days. They trekked the difficult jungle terrain for nearly 72 hours and reached the vicinity of the first camp on the third day.

'The time was 11.15 a.m. on Saturday on June 15. For the first time they saw a camp of the terrorists at a distance. The terrorists had slaughtered a stag and were preparing for their noon meal. The task force delayed their attack until the enemy had finished their meal. The attack commenced at 12.05 pm and lasted only 20 minutes.

The sudden attack right round the camp with automatic weapons and powerful hand grenades took the terrorists by surprise and they ran for life. Six terrorists died and over 20 others were seriously injured in the battle. However, others retreated into the jungle taking the injured along with them . . .

'Their next target was another camp some miles away from the first. This second camp belonged to PLOT of Uma Maheswaran.

'This attack was also so sudden that the terrorists did not attempt to fight back. Several terrorists escaped into the jungle but 12 others met with instantaneous death. After recovering useful documents and other weapons, the camp had been set on fire by the Commandos. Several vehicles used by the terrorists also have been destroyed.

'These attacks have been commended by the National Security Minister Mr Lalith Athulathmudali as exemplary and are considered as a major defeat to the terrorists.'

What really happened

The 'successful operation' which the Minister commended the commandos was nothing but another gruesome massacre of innocent Tamil civilians and the story put out through the media was a deliberate invention to conceal this slaughter which was carried out just days before the-called ceasefire announced by the government.

Scores of Tamils, all civilians,died in this 'operation'.

Here's our report of what actually took place.

Some men in khaki uniform went into a remote village called Kokudiyan about two miles from Cheddiyar Kaddaiadampan, Mannar, on 14th June 1985 about 9 a.m. and took away 10 persons into the jungle and shot them.

Later in the day, the following were found dead with gunshot injuries.

Mahalingam Murugiah — 60 years, married; Kathiravel Tharmalingam — 56 years, married; Murugappa — 44 years, married; Arumugam Rasu — 35 years, married; Murugiah Kanes — 37 years, married.

The bodies of four others were found only on 15th June as they had been taken separately to other areas. They were:

Mookan Navasdivayam — 23 years, married; S.Ponnusamy — 23 years, not married; S. Thankarasa — 17 years, not married; K. Ramasamy — 20, not married.

Three more people were shot dead and burnt on 14th June at Adampanthalvu, near Vattakandal. They were: S. Alexander — father of 9 children; S. Arokiam — father of 2 children; S. Anthony — father of 6 children.

'HARTAL' IN JAFFNA AND VAVUNIYA

Protest demonstrations, closure of shops, government offices and businesses, and boycott of schools were staged in the northern Tamil towns of Jaffna and Vavuniya on July 8. People were protesting against the repressive measures of the government, the atrocities committed by the security forces and the 'ceasefire' announced by the government which the people feared might result in the 'sell-out' of the Tamil cause.

People, women and children included, estimated to be in their thousands, participated in the protest campaign which lasted several hours. Markets remained shut and transport came to a grinding halt.

The enthusiasm and fighting spirit displayed by the participants and the support given by the general mass of the Tamil people surprised observers.

applications were turned down. But these applications were from Sri Lankans who had already been living in third countries before seeking asylum in the USA. She pointed out that by using the appeal procedures, any Sri Lankan facing deportation could postpone his departure for up to a year.The Committee for Refugees maintained that the Tamils denied asylum in the USA and other Western countries should not be deported against their will as long as communal violence continued in Sri Lanka.

FROM PAGE 4

flict between the two major communities in the country, Mr Hector Jayawardene, an experienced and able lawyer, and bound by the parameters of the brief handed to him, elaborated on the division of powers and functions among the proposed Pradeshya Mandalayas (elected bodies in small areas presently under every Assistant Government Agent), and their relationship to the proposed District Councils. The proposals were presented as an exercise in devolution of power and establishment of grassroot democracy for the whole country.

Not surprisingly, and as expected, the Tamil groups were not enamoured by the cosmetic trappings with which the old government proposals were presented and rejected them. The last minute visit of the Indian Foreign Minister to Thimpu on hearing of the deadlock did not change the situation. However, total breakdown was averted. The ENLF said: 'We will not walk out of the talks, we outrightly reject the proposals since they did not even remotely meet the aspirations of our people.'

Any pretence of the secrecy of the talks seems to have been abandoned after the conclusion of the talks on July 12 when the parties agreed to resume talks on August 12. The 'Hindu' of July 13 carried a relatively detailed account of the talks while the contents of the report submitted to the Cabinet by Mr Hector Jayawardene had somehow found its way to the press, local and international.

Judging from the tone and tenor of Rajiv's speech in Madras on July 16, one can be certain that by the time the parties meet again on August 12, India would have played a big behind-the-scene role.

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TRINCO DEAL FIZZLES OUT

The contract for the 'oil tank farm' at Trincomalee in east Sri Lanka fizzled out when the dummy firms fronting for the US Navy did not complete the required legal formalities by June 30.

This was the second occasion that the contract, awarded by the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, for this project fell through as a result of strong protest, both at home and abroad, that the deal was not a genuine commercial one but a cover for providing the US Sixth Fleet with re-fuelling and storage facilities at Trincomalee.

The first contract, awarded to the US firm Coastal Corporation, fell through when the firm's connections with the US Navy were exposed. The second deal, in which the two main promoters of the original Coastal tender formed separate new companies to join a tripartite consortium and tender under a new guise, was also exposed.

It collapsed when the third party refused to go along with the questionable deal and the dummy companies fought each other. The government hoped that it could persuade the Reagan administration to increase its economic assistance to Sri Lanka in return for the 'oil tank farm'.

President Jayawardene admitted this in an interview with a foreign journal. President Reagan and several of his aides publicly thanked the UNP government for the help given.

Cool

Later, the US cooled on the deal, when it obtained re-fuelling facilities for its navy in other Sri Lanka ports. The shift in US tactics towards India, which had opposed this Trincomalee exercise vigorously, after Rajiv Gandhi become Prime Minister also contributed to this loss of interest.

The fizzling out of the Trincomalee deal will remove a major cause of friction between India and Sri Lanka, which the former correctly saw as a direct threat to her security.

If the government, as it now claims, wants to mend fences with India, whose co-operation in bringing about the ethnic ceasefire is highly praised, it should follow up by cancelling the lease given to VOA to set up its biggest radio transmitter station outside the USA.

Apart from being a powerful vehicle for subversion and ideological aggression against India and other countries of the region that follow an independent policy in foreign and local affairs. India's official and unofficial spokesmen have said that the new VOA transmitter station can jam and otherwise interfere with its entire system of telecommunication and signals.

Patriotic forces in Sri Lanka and those who want to see Indo-Sri Lanka relations normalised and strengthened are intensifying their campaign to have the new VOA project stopped. Acquired for VOA by the SLBC, the 1,000 acres for the project have also run into legal snarls that are still not sorted out.

CONTRIBUTE OR BE PUNISHED

Many civil servants, and state sector employees have been penalised for not contributing towards the so-called National Defence Fund set up by the Sri Lankan government. Even private sector employees and businessmen have been compelled under pressure to contribute to the fund which is to be used for increased militarisation.

Transferred overnight

Over seventy teachers who failed to contribute or contribute generous sums towards the fund in the southern Hakmana electorate have been transferred overnight to distant places as punishment. The Ministry of Education issued a circular requiring all teachers to donate money from their monthly salaries. Following protests from trade unions, the compulsory requirement was withdrawn, and donations were called for on a purely voluntary basis. However, the penal transfer of teachers demonstrates that those who refuse to contribute towards the government's attempt at increased militarisation would incur the wrath of the authorities.

ARMS BUSINESS IS GOOD BUSINESS

In the period 1980 to 1984, the US sold about 46 billion US dollars' worth of arms to developing countries.

This is revealed in a report to the US Congress by its research service on the sale of US arms to other countries.

The report also reveals that the US is the biggest supplier of arms to the Middle East and South Asia. Between 1981 and 1984, US arms sales and supplies to Latin American countries increased five times.

Developing countries

In 1985, US arms sales to developing countries amounted to 7.6 billion dollars.

Simultaneously, the 'New York Times' has estimated that, since 1975, the developing countries have spent about 236.8 billion dollars on buying military hardware from the USA.

The UN Arms Control and Disarmament Agency had calculated that arms sales to developing countries have gone up four times during 1971 and 1979.

In Africa, the poorest continent on this planet, military budgets have increased ten times in the past 20 years.

US arms sales to developing countries not merely rake in tremendous profits for the US arms manufacturers and dealers. They increase political instability and economic disequilibrium in the developing countries, promote tensions between them, and allow US imperialism and its TNCs better opportunities to penetrate these regions.

KILLER HOMEGUARDS

Homeguards in Sri Lanka are a special breed. They were created for 'Tiger hunting' which is the same as 'Tamil hunting'. So long as they carried out their intended purpose, the government and the Sinhala ruling politicians appeared to be well satisfied no matter how many innocent Tamils were killed.

Now people, even Sinhalese, are wondering how to guard themselves against these trigger-happy homeguards.

Recently, at Anuradhapura, a homeguard was arrested by the police for shooting dead a Sinhalese businessman near Nochiyagama. The businessman, Gamini Silva, was travelling in a private bus when the homeguard boarded the vehicle and demanded to see his identity card. Mr Silva did not have his identity card in his possession and an argument ensued between the two, ending up with the homeguard shooting dead the businessman.

'Defending the motherland'

Had the victim been a Tamil, probably he would have been described as a terrorist and the homeguard given the treatment of a national hero defending his motherland. However, the victim being a Sinhalese, the homeguard was promptly taken into custody and a magisterial inquiry was held into the murder.

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MATHEW'S MYTHS EXPLODED

One of the ways in which ex-Cabinet Minister Mr Cyril Mathew sought to carry out his anti-Tamil propaganda was his much publicised allegation that Tamil professors and lecturers were favouring Tamil students to enter universities. He authored a book under the title 'Diabolical Conspiracy' in which he wrote about 'Illicit Entry into University' by Tamil students. He wrote, among other things,

> '. . . the important and serious question whether all the Tamil Medium students who entered the Medical, Engineering, Science and other Faculties did so by the good fortune of receiving improper excess marks comes compellingly into our minds. This is not only a burning question; it is also a question that painfully sears and violently explodes within the hearts of our Sinhala students, parents and teachers.'

The university teachers belonging to the Tamil community demanded a commission to inquire into the Minister's allegation. But the government failed to respond and allowed the Minister to carry on his poisonous propaganda.

Now the Department of Education has 'exploded a number of myths about examiner malpractices'. The Marga Institute recently conducted a seminar at which officials of the Education Department rejected the allegation of partiality or favouritism in the marking of the GCE 'A' level answer scripts.

According to the 'Daily News' (26th June), this is what the representations of the Education Department told the participants at the Seminar:

'The Examinations Department at a Marga Seminar last week exploded a number of myths about examiner malpractices, and said very careful checks have established that there is no community-biased cheating at the GCE 'A' level examination. Representatives of the department agreed that there is a lot of loose talk in many places that Sinhala and Tamil examiners favour students of their own communities,. 'We've gone into it and find these allegations untrue. Last year, a large number of Tamil students scored high marks in mathematics. There was a cross-check of the marking by non-Tamil examiners who, despite their lack of Tamil, could check the mathematical working. They found the marking correct. Similarly, allegations that Sinhala examiners favoured Sinhala students were found to be totally untrue,' officials said.

Discriminating

Because the charge of favouritism has had so much currency, the department sent a special team of Sinhala officials to keep tabs on some Tamil examination centres. The team, however, encountered substantial resentment about the checking. Many teachers and officials in the Tamil areas felt such checks were discriminatory. The department said there was no reason for such resentment because similar inspections were carried out in Sinhala areas too. The department also shot down a 'theory' that those setting the questions sometimes deliberately make mistakes to give the advantage to certain candidates mediawise. Dr Stanley Kalpage, Secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education and Chairman of the University Grants Commission, had a very pertinent question to ask the examinations department on the subject. 'Why have you not made these findings public,' he asked. 'Some of these myths estrange communities. The public must be told the truth and that will help the communities to develop confidence in each other.'

The department's reason for not making such findings public was that it was bound by 'an oath of secrecy'.

A TAMIL WOMAN TO BE OXFORD UNION PRESIDENT

Jeya Wilson, a 23-year-old Tamil born in Sri Lanka and a naturalised citizen of New Zealand, has been elected to the much coveted post of President of the Oxford Union Debating Society for 1985-1986.

Jeya Wilson is the first married woman and the first New Zealand citizen to become President of the Oxford Union. It will only be the sixth time in its 162-year history that the Union will have a woman president.

She is a post-graduate studying for a doctoral thesis in International Relations at St Anthony's College in Oxford where also she holds the post of President of the student body. She is married to Dr Peter Utting, a research scientist. Jeya Wilson was educated in Sri Lanka, Britain and the United States.

She admitted that it had been an uphill struggle against four disadvantages: 'I am black, married, a post-graduate and come from a small colledge, St Anthony's.' Jeya Wilson intends to create greater involvement of women in the Union. 'I think it is a very sexist place full of male chauvinists, one of the reasons that motivated me to stand. A mediocre woman is always handicapped here and you have to be twice as good to compete,' she said.

POLICE ASSAULT SPARKS OFF STRIKE

Seventy-five thousand workers in the Talawakelle area staged a strike as a result of assault by police on five Tamil workers on Holyrood Estate. The reason for the assault was that the workers had had a quarrel with three other Sinhalese workers. Apparently, the Sinhalese workers had made complaint to the police. The police arrived on the estate on June 6th and brutally man-handled Jayamoorthy Sundaraj and three other Tamil workers. Thereafter, the workers had been paraded in a semi-nude state in the streets of Talawakelle. Later, one worker who had been previously seriously injured was admitted to the hospital.

Following this incident, 75,000 workers in the Lindula, Kotagala, Dickoya, Hatton and Talawakelle areas struck work protesting against the inhuman treatment of fellow workers. The Ceylon Workers Congress and the Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union condemned the unprovoked attacks.

KIDNAPPED JOURNALIST FREED

Cecil Wickremanayake, a reporter with the 'Ceylon Daily News', who was kidnapped allegedly by members of a Tamil militant group said after his release that his abductors treated him like their own 'father'. The journalist was taken by the militants on June 27 and was held for a day on suspicion.

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TAMIL REFUGEES IN WESTERN EUROPE

Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, O.M.I.

During the past few months the number of Tamils seeking refuge in Western European countries has increased dramatically. Holland has about 3,500 persons, France 10–15,000. West Germany 11–15,000. Recently, Britain has been receiving several hundred persons each week. In the meantime, the number of refugees in South India is said to be between 80,000 to 100,000. This would mean about 150,000 persons out of a Tamil population of about 1.8 million (leaving out the Tamils of plantation areas). Since these are mostly young men of the ages 15–35 it would mean a considerable proportion of the young males are leaving the North and East of Sri Lanka. To be young, male and Tamil is to face serious problems in Sri Lanka, specially in the North and East.

Why are they leaving?

They are fleeing because of the danger to life in those regions. The area has been the scene of much violence during the past year due to the combat between the forces of the state and the militant separatist Tamil groups. There have been attacks and counter-attacks in which hundreds have lost their lives. The armed forces, finding it difficult to engage the militant youth in combat or even recognise them, have off and on attacked non-combatant civilians causing several deaths. One of the strategies of the state's defence forces is the cordoning and searching of the suspected areas when all the young men in the area are rounded up. These have then to prove their identity and non-involvement in military activity. There is also a strong appeal for youth to join the guerrilla militants as they feel frustrated with their defenceless situation. The imposition of the surveillance zones has also made life difficult for families on the sea coast.

Due to all these, the youth and specially their parents, desire that they leave the area in order to save their lives. This is the principal motivation of Tamil youth who leave Sri Lanka in this situation. Those who can come to Europe are, of course, persons who can find the money for it, even selling whatever property they have. But they are not coming here primarily for economic reasons. There was no such exodus to Europe in the past decades, or even after the large-scale attacks on the Tamils in the South in July 1983. Further, Western Europe does not present prospects of such profitable employment now. Those who find jobs have to be content with low-paid ones. The availability of social service subsidies is an attraction, but the danger back home is what is pushing them out of Sri Lanka. Many are interrupting their schooling to save their lives.

Even in the south of Sri Lanka, though there has been no major outburst of violence since July 1983, the Tamil people there live in continual fear and insecurity. They are afraid that trouble in the North and East may spread South on a sudden provocation. They find it difficult to get jobs and accommodation in the South. This does not make the South a place to which Tamils can come with a sense of security. After July 1983 about 100,000 Tamils left for the North as (temporary) refugees. Many have not returned since then, or only the working people have returned leaving their families in the North.

A Sri Lankan problem

This is primarily a problem for the Sri Lankans to resolve. The responsibility is ours. The crime and the shame are principally ours. We have to resolve this problem speedily or else the country will be irretrievably ruined economically, psychologically and morally.

Western European Response?

In this sad situation Tamils are coming to Western Europe in large numbers. South India can offer them only life in a refugee camp, with even the danger of involvement in militant activities. The Western European countries are alarmed at this influx. In different ways, each country tries to close its doors to them.

I would like to suggest that there are several reasons for a more helpful response to this problem in a concerted manner by Western Europe.

1. Western Europe has been closely related to the economic policies of Sri Lanka, especially in recent years. It has influenced our economic policies and consequent political stances which may to some extent have led to the aggravation of ethnic tensions. This needs more serious enquiry.

2. Western Europe has had much to do with the economic and political situation of Sri Lanka and other Asian countries during several centuries. Our present problems are partly related to the need to resolve such issues in the post-independence period. Thus the British are responsible for bringing about one million Tamils from South India to Sri Lanka for their coffee and tea plantations. This complicates Sri Lanka's ethnic and land use problems to a considerable extent.

3. Our lands, our products, our markets and our people as cheap labour, and co-operators, have been available to Western Europe for nearly five centuries. The Dutch had much of our land for 140 years from 1656–1796. The Portuguese were prior to that and the British from 1796–1948. All this was part of the European expansion in Asia, Africa and the Americas. European capital was built up in part by such enterprises.

4. Even today European companies benefit from our lands, our raw materials, our markets, our cheap labour — not to mention our tourist attractions.

5. The European aid is meant to help the development of our infrastructure and economic production. Such aid will be of little avail if there is continuing mass destruction in the country. Even the productive base is being affected. Communications are disrupted. Investment discouraged Much of the national effort is directed towards conflict and conflict resolutions. The economy is bound to suffer seriously should such conditions continue.

6. Sri Lanka's present conflicts are leading to political alliances which can lead to greater involvement in international power groups, cf., the Israeli connection and its implications.

I am recalling these because all these are relevant and related to our present crisis — though as secondary factors.

We have been open to Western Europeans for nearly 500 years. We have been bled for their betterment. Now we have a difficulty, which I think is temporary. Hence it is only fair and human that Western Europeans should help out in this issue for some months. In any case the countries which can receive us are Western Europe and those which Europeans have occupied during the last 500 years: the Americas, Australia and New Zealand.

Towards a solution

Though the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka is now very acute, a resolution of the problem is possible. This requires an agreement of political leaders to a sharing of power at the centre and in the provinces of the country. This can give the minority Tamil group an opportunity to manage their own affairs within a united Sri Lanka. It can ensure them security of life and the opportunity to develop their own areas, way of life, language and culture. It will give to the majority Sinhala people a sense of security concern-

TURN TO NEXT PAGE

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SLAUGHTER IN THE BUS

'It was the sort of atrocity that has become depressingly familiar in Lebanon. A bus crowded with civilians is stopped by gunmen, who order members of one religious group on to the road. The rest of the passengers, members of a different religious group, are forced to stay inside. Then the gunmen opened fire, spraying the bus with their automatic weapons. A moment later 17 innocent civilians are dead, 6 are wounded and another round of violence and reprisal has been set in motion.

Not Lebanon

'This time, however, the locale was not Lebanon. Nor were the victims Muslim or Christian. They were Hindu Tamils caught up last week in their own sectarian conflict — one raging nearly halfway round the world from Beirut in the once tranquil island nation of Sri Lanka' — 'Newsweek', 17.6.85.

The incident occurred on June 3 in the northern Tamil village of Pankulam near Trincomalee. The victims were all Tamils and the assailants were Sri Lankan Police Commandos.

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

ing the unity, integrity and independence of the country.

Such a solution can be greatly helped by the concerted effort of the Western European countries in conjunction with the USA, Canada and Japan who form the Sri Lanka aid group. These countries have enormous impact on Sri Lanka's policies and can bring considerable influence to bear on our government and other political groups towards such an agreement. They can co-relate their efforts with those of the Indian Government in a mediating role.

Real solution

The real solution to the problem of refugees also lies in such a consensus on a devolution of political power within a united Sri Lanka. Then the vast majority of the present refugees can return to their homes without fear to their lives and help develop the country in peace and with justice to all.

We can all give a priority to such a peaceful solution which is the only humane way out of the present impasse.

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

A FORMIDABLE CHALLENGE

The ethnic problem has been with us for nearly three decades, since the insensate switch to SINHALA ONLY in 1956.

Since then, five Sinhalese-dominated governments had ample opportunity to do justice to the Tamil people, if any of them cared enough. Instead, all of them — President Jayawardene's government the most — had been riding the high horse, thinking that the Tamil people could be trodden upon, that they did not matter that they could continue to be treated as SECOND CLASS CITIZENS in their land of birth. It needed the power of the barrel of the gun to awaken the Sinhalese leadership — and the Sinhalese masses — to the reality of Sri Lanka's present situation.

Courage and vision

Now that they have woken up — except for the Sri Lanka Freedom Party leadership and some section of the Maja Sangha — who are making funny noises — let us hope and pray that they would have the courage and vision to meet the formidable challenge of converting the present delicate truce into a permanent peace — if they want their Motherland to progress and prosper.

Editorial, Saturday Review, 29.6.85

SINHALA JINGOISM

Men like the scholarly R. L. Brohier, to whom Ceylon (Sri Lanka) was so dear — whose jungles he traversed and wrote much about was at first averse to leaving his country. But in the end he made up his mind to settle in Australia. Why? Because Sinhala jingoism manifested itself crudely at every level of life. The Burghers felt alienated and felt that they did not belong to the new order of things. However, they did not allow it to become a grievance!

We see the effects of the 1956 Sinhala Only jingoism today in its fullest dimensions. Oxford, Cambridge and the Sorbonne for children of political leaders (some of whom were directly involved in keeping the goviya in his place). The lean and hungry Sinhala-educated graduates almost near to penury, while English by its sheer vitality calls the tune.

Shane Kolemeyer, The Island (Colombo), 3.6.85

MYOPIC POLITICAL MOVES

During the past half a dozen years this country (Sri Lanka) has been plunged into a growing clamour for separatism. The causes of this clamour are deep-rooted and varied. The past 29 or 30 years have witnessed the winds of change in a society that lived in peace, harmony and love for centuries. A society with deep religious aspirations, superior culture and admirable sense of brotherhood respected not only the life of human beings but even of animals and refused to kill even a fly without a cause . .

Turbulent cauldron

Unfortunately, this country has been plunged into a turbulent cauldron of boiling oil during the past few decades due to myopic political moves. Those who ran for cheap popularity at the expense of nation's education, communication and religion have suffered the consequences that they really deserve.

— Osmand P.J. Seneviratne, The Island: 3.7.85

TRIGGER-HAPPY ROWDIES

Was it necessary for seven innocent people — many of them bus travellers — to be killed before the government faced up to its folly in creating so-called 'Home Guards' from among its political supporters, giving them guns, and entrusting them with security functions that should properly be exercised by the police or the armed services?

The seven deaths in different parts of the country (Sri Lanka) all tell a similar story. Power-drunk and trigger-happy rowdies, handpicked by UNP MPs from among their supporters, have self-importantly arrogated to themselves powers to stop, question and search innocent civilians and let off guns at them if dissatisfied with their response or the degree of respect that they feel due to them.

Asking the police to exercise better supervision over thugs is no remedy. For the police, like everyone else, know that they have powerful patrons who can have them sacked or transferred to Jaffna. The whole scheme must be abandoned, the issued guns recalled, and the Home Guards sent home.

Editorial, Forward, 1.7.85

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A POINT OF VIEW

Sri Lanka: The Federal Alternative

By Jehan Perera

It is easy to understand how the ethnic problem has got so bad', said Punchi Banda while we were walking back to his house. He was still thinking about the animated discussion we had left behind at the village 'Hotel and Bar'. A moonless night had fallen and I was more interested in following the narrow beam of torchlight and avoiding the crawling thing I worried would suddenly pop up and bite me. But what PB (as he preferred to be called) had to say was plain enough for me to understand without much concentration.

'You know', 'how hospitably my family has treated you. Even though we did not know you we let you have the front room in our house. And you can stay there as long as you like to and see how we live in the village.' Quite overwhelmed by this statement I struggled to phrase an adequate reply. 'No, no', PB said impatiently, 'I did not mean it like that. I was trying to illustrate my point about the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict. Now suppose you spent 6 months with us and no one thought anything odd about it. And then you suddenly demanded a part of the house, not only the room you are now in, but also the verandah, would that not be very wrong and unfair? 'I agreed it would. 'This is exactly what the Tamils are trying to do to us', concluded PB gloomily, and then directed his torch at a creature that slithered by.

In the shadow of the Mahavamsa

An analysis of PB's description of the ethnic problem offers illuminating insights into the Sinhalese psyche as it relates to the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict. In his example, PB ws clearly equating his house to Sri Lanka, his family to the Sinhalese and myself to the Tamils. Just as his family fully owned their house so did the Sinhalese own Sri Lanka. Just as I was an outsider who had barely spent a week in the village, so were the Tamil intruders into Sri Lanka. Students of Sinhalese history will recognise that PB was speaking in the Mahavamsa idiom. PB's 'house' example reflected that ancient Sinhalese chronicle's version of Sri Lanka's early history — an image of the island as the precious possession of the Sinhalese and the last refuge of Buddhism. In this view of the world, others were seen at best as outsiders, and the Tamils in particular as intruders and enemies.

Thus, although most Sinhalese would, today, base their opposition to regional autonomy or federalism on the grounds of fear that it will lead to separation (a reasonable fear in the context of bitter secessionist violence), a further explanation is to be found in the Mahavamsa mentality. In terms of this reasoning, Sri Lanka is the country of the Sinhalese; it is not the country of the Tamils or of the other communities. Carried to this extreme it implies the Tamils have no business to ask for, and none whatsoever to be given, the power to govern themselves, in any degree in any part of Sri Lanka.

Instead of accepting this as a fixed psychological fact, it is time the Sinhalese asked themselves whether they can fairly expect the other communities to accept this way of looking at their status in Sri Lanka. The minority communities have their own vision of Sri Lanka and their place in it — as their homeland too, where they have the right to live in peace with justice just as the Sinhalese do. In fact, if they do accept the Mahavamsa view, then the Sinhalese cannot expect their full loyalty — how can Sri Lanka, and the Sinhalese, expect aliens to be loyal?

The common interests

When the Sinhalese leaders insist 'District Councils and no more' and the Tamil separatists respond 'Eelam' the conflict in positions or stances taken seems unresolvable. But positions do not exist in a vacuum. People took up positions (for instance, District Councils, Eelam, federalism) because these positions represent certain key interests (such as social security, employment, educational opportunity). In other words, what people really want are the interests, and they see the position as the way to achieve those interests.

Clearly, all people do not want the same things. They do not share identical interests. Many of the interests of an Eskimo hunting seal in the North Pole are bound to be different from those of a German factory worker. Likewise, in Sri Lanka, the interests of the people living in the north are not identical to those in the south. But the differences in their interests are very much smaller than the gap in their positions might suggest.

Due to historical reasons these different interests have manifested themselves in the form of different political positions represented by the various political parties. These positions appear to be in fundamental coflict. But behind the facade, the interests which these positions are supposed to represent are not in basic conflict. So if we, Sinhalese and Tamils, can break away from the hostile positions we have taken and focus instead on our real interests we will find that our problems have viable solutions.

What are the common and overriding interests of the Sinhalese and Tamils? To live in security, with adequate employment, education and trade, to enjoy freedom and prosperity. But now the Sinhalese perceive all of this to be threatened by Tamil secession and eventual domination. So they insist 'District councils and no more'. The Tamils, on the other hand. view the present system of government as one in which these same interests are not protected and they in turn are dominated. Thus, the key to finding a peaceful solution is to find a means of reconciling the true interests of the Sinhalese and Tamils within a united Sri Lanka.

The Tamil interest in unity

To reach this solution the Sinhalese will have to put away the Mahavamsa mentality. It may have been appropriate in the 6th century when in fact the Mahavamsa was written. It is not appropriate at the close of the 20th century. Likewise the Tamils will have to give up secessionist violence. Indeed, the Tamils do not have historical chronicles that show the Sinhalese as the traditional enemies of the Tamils. This explains in part why the Tamils consistently opposed separation from the colonial era right up to 1975.

They also opposed separation for more pragmatic reasons. First. because they see Sri Lanka as their home, and not India which would merely swallow them up in its vastness. Thus, many Tamils living in Colombo who in the aftermath of the 1983 riots left Sri Lanka intending to settle down permanently in India had returned to Sri Lanka. They had more in common with their Sinhalese friends in Colombo than with strangers in Madras.

A second reason is because the Tamils need the rest of Sri Lanka for their economic survival — markets for their perishable crops, employment

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for their youth, and customers for their business. Separation was never in the interests of the Tamils, and is not now either. It is only the recent political and military developments threat have pushed them into taking up positions that they, for good reasons, rejected earlier.

A glimpse at recent histdory will make this clearer. When S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike who was to become Prime Minister in 1956 first proposed federalism in 1925, the Tamils together with the low-country Sinhalese opposed it. When the Federal Party was formed in the aftermath of the mass deprivation of the Estate (Indian) Tamils citizenship rights, the Tamils rejected federalism once again and thoroughly defeated the FP at the 1952 general elections. They did so because they considered their ties to the south as being of highest importance, both politically and economically.

It was only in 1956, when both major political parties, the UNP, SLFP opted for Sinhala-only language legislation that the Tamils finally turned towards federalism. Even then, every Tamil candidate who campaigned for separation lost his election deposit. After the riots of 1956 and 1958, the university admission crisis of the early 1970s and the adoption of the first Republican constitution in 1972 (which eliminated the guarantees given to minorities) the Tamils still rejected separatism.

Finally, in 1975, separatism was accepted by the major Tamil political parties which formed the TULF. Even then, at the 1977 elections, a majority of Tamils voted for candidates who rejected separation. Most of those who voted for the TULF voted for a party that championed Tamil rights and not for separation in itself. The demand for separation was then seen as a bargaining chip.

Towards a solution

At this time of grave danger and misery it is for the Sinhalese, the majority community in Sri Lanka who consequently have the largest stake in peace, to take the initiative in reaching a peaceful solution. The tried and tested principles of federal government offer the best chance. The Sinhalese have a right to obtain safeguards in respect of separation and foreign intervention, these can be obtained by means of well-drafted constitutional provisions and foreign treaties. And it will be in the Tamils' interest to help the Sinhalese safeguard their interests and arrive at a fair solution that will bring peace and normalcy to the north, rather than continue without it.

To achieve this end, the TULF, as the elected representatives of the Tamils, must also act in a statesmanlike manner. Viewed in its historical context, the TULF's acceptance of a separatist platform in 1975 is perhaps undestandable. But is was nonetheless a mistake of tragic porportions for it meant a shift in power away from democratically elected leaders accountable to their electorates, to bands of armed youth accountable to no one.

Attempted secession is not any part of a viable solution to Sri Lanka's crisis. To the contrary, for the past 10 years, it has meant gory bloodshed in which the bulk of the victims have been innocent Tamils caught in the north in between the depredations of the armed forces and guerrillas, and mauled in the south by goondas.

Secessionist platform

The TULF must accept this reality — that its secessionist platform has enabled militant Sinhalese leaders to play upon Sinhalese emotions; that what might eventually have been accepted by the Sinhalese as legitimate Tamil grievances have instead become metamorphosed into a national threat to the Sinhalese; and that secession-based violence has alienated international opinion which, although alive to gross human rights violations, nevertheless finds secession both unreasonable and unpalatable.

It is in the interests of a solution that is both just and satisfying that the TULF must give up its cry for a separate state and instead take up the case of federalism that it abandoned 10 years ago. India must encourage the TULF to do so. India must also take steps to restrain the Tamil guerrillas just as it attempts to restrain its Sikh guerrillas. Then India's efforts to bring about a negotiated solution in Sri Lanka would be seen in a more positive light by the Sinhalese who are currently sceptical of India's role in the whole crisis.

The goal to be aimed for is a federal Sri Lanka where Sinhalese and Tamils share political power and live with respect for one another. The Sinhalese simply because they are the majority cannot expect the minorities, who value their own sense of dignity, to live in Sri Lanka on terms dictated by the Sinhalese. Responsible Sinhalese leaders must discourage this type of thinking which is precisely what has led, by stages, to Tamil disenchantment and secessionist violence. But this is not enough. Together with the Tamil leadership they must work towards establishing the right of regional self-government within a united Sri Lanka, which is what federalism is about. It is in the Sinhalese interest, as the Tamil, to compromise in this before violence embraces the whole island. And it is in India's interest to be supportive.

TAMIL, A NATIONAL LANGUAGE?

'The Tamil language has been declared a national language under the Constitution of Sri Lanka. The Tamils are treated equally. We cannot understand what their grievances are?' This is the vein in which the government's propagandists always react when they face charges of discrimination against Tamils.,

SATURDAY REVIEW is the only regional English weekly printed and published from the northern Tamil city of Jaffna. It is the only paper subjected to special government censorship. All materials intended for publication in the paper are required to be transmitted 250 miles away to Colombo for censorship and approval. The authority of the Government Agent (the civilian head) of Jaffna to approve articles was withdrawn several months ago. And when materials are sent to Colombo, they are invariably subjected to long and unexplained delays. There is no doubt that all these measures are designed to stifle the publication of 'Saturday Review

Action against paper

Now the Press Council of Sri Lanka, which was intended to protect the 'freedom of the press' has decided to take action against the paper, its editor (who is incidentally a Sinhalese), printers and publishers. Why? For publishing the paper with the warning to its readers: **'The only Government-censored newspaper in Sri Lanka'.**

The original notice summoning the parties to appear before the Press Council for an inquiry in Colombo was in **Sinhala language only** No English or Tamil translation. The parties returned the notice asking for a Tamil or English version of the notice.

In a country where the Tamil language enjoys the constitutional status of a 'national language' one would have expected the authorities to at least provide a Tamil translation of the notice. That was not to be. Now the parties have been re-issued with the original notice in Sinhala only with an English translation. No Tamil! And still they claim that Tamil and Tamils are treated equally!

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BRITAIN'S DUTY TO TAMIL REFUGEES

(Copies of these letters received by us appeared in 'The Times')

The Home Secretary's announcement of the imposition of a visa requirement for nationals of Sri Lanka conceals the nature of the tragedy affecting the Tamil community in that country.

Every day we listen to the horrific personal accounts of young Tamils telling of repeated arrests, torture, homes looted and burned, and random shooting of young men. The security measures of the Sri Lankan government may be 'aimed at Tamil terorrists and their organisations' (leader, May 29), but they are in effect carried out against the young male Tamil population generally.

This situation has been building up inexorably over the past two years. During that time Britain and her European partners have done nothing to put pressure on the Sri Lankan government to bring the island's communities together. Urgent diplomatic initiatives are now needed.

The Home Secretary's response to the threat of a 'flood' of Tamil refugees in Britain is deeply disappointing. France and Germany have received many more Tamils than Britain and yet have allowed them all to remain temporarily. When events in Poland and Iran demanded it, the British Government agreed not to force refugees back to these countries. We strongly believe that the same treatment should be available to the Tamils, who are in addition Commonwealth citizens.

British voluntary agencies and Tamil community groups here are willing to assist the Home Office in a planned programme for Tamils arriving in Britain. We have an obligation to provide a safe haven to those who need it until the situation in Sri Lanka allows them to go home. We look forward to a dialogue with the government on how this can best be achieved.

Martin Barber, Director
The British Refugee Council,
Bondway House,
3/9 Bondway, London, SW8

Reports of continuing intercommunal violence in Sri Lanka are not reassuring for Tamil refugees who may be forcibly returned there. Whatever the intentions of the Sri Lanka Government, substantial areas of the island are not under their control. The refugees might be sent back from Britain to their deaths.

In 1969, when Idi Amin was threatening to expel the Ugandan Asian community, many of them British passport-holders, I met the then Indian Foreign Secretary, Swaran Singh, who said that India would take, on a temporary basis, East African Asian refugees on the understanding that they had the right as United Kingdom passport-holders eventually to settle in Britain. India later admitted thousands of refugees from East Africa on this basis.

The Tamil refugees in Britain should be offered a temporary right to stay until order has been re-established in Sri Lanka and their lives are not at risk. As in the case of the East African Asians, the voluntary organisations in Britain might be willing to set up and manage temporary accommodation, and the refugees could be required to register with the police. Immigrants are detained for months while their right to settle here is investigated. Surely they could be maintained for a few months to assure their right to live.

Britain has a proud tradition of protecting refugees. It would betray that tradition to force the Tamils back to Sri Lanka until their safety is assured.

Shirley Williams, President
Social Democratic Party
4 Cowley Street,
London, SW1

It is perhaps surprising that on the day the United Kingdom has been found in breach of its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights, it is about to breach another international convention. I am referring to the convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees and the effec it might have on the way the Hom Secretary proposes to treat Tamil asy lum seekers.

The refugee Convention, unlike th European Convention, is part of Ur ited Kingdom domestic law in that i has been expressly incorporated in the immigration rules currently in force. That should mean that every Tami refused asylum, on the merits of hi case should be given a proper right o appeal or review against refusal (Arti cle 32).

Even if, through some technica argument, this article is held not to apply, some kind of right of appeal i regarded as a basic requirement b the United Nations High Commissior er for Refugees (the UNHCR) wit whom the United Kingdom is under a duty to co-operate with article 35(1). Thus the problem which your leader article (May 29) was rightly concerned about ought not to arise although the Home Office has to date not acknowledged that there is such a right of appeal.

Moreover, if on refusing asylum to any Sri Lankan refugee it is proposed to send the refugee back to Sri Lanka, this could amount to 'refoulement', which is expressly prohibited by article 33. The difficulty here is whether or not a person is in fact a refugee in the sense that he has a well-founded fea of persecution on grounds of racia origin, political opinion, etc.

In this respect, the Home Secretary does, it seems, need to be reminded that the mere fact that his officials decide that a particular applicant is not a refugee does not mean that he is is not one for the purposes of complying with the United Kingdom's obligations under the Convention.

Alper Riza,
8 Stone Buildings,
Lincoln's Inn, London WC2

ZIONISM & SINHALA-BUDDHISM

Like the Palestinians, thousands of Tamils of Sri Lanka today find themselves in many foreign lands having been uprooted from the land of their birth.

The policy pursued by the Sri Lankan government in driving out the Tamils from areas in which they had lived traditionally is identical to the policy adopted by the Israeli regime for many decades. The advocates of the ethno-religious creed of 'Sinhala-Buddhism' are no different from the Zionists when it comes to the treatment of Tamils.

Here are some quotes from leading Zionist personalities:

Theodor Herzl, founder of Zionism: 'We shall try to spirit the penniless population (i.e. Arabs) across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our country.'

Joseph Weitz, leading Zionist in charge of colonisation of Israel: 'With the Arabs we shall not achieve our aim of being an independent people in this country. The only solution is Eretz

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SRI LANKAN TAMILS IN NIGERIA

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Sri Lankan Tamils in Nigeria who are undergoing lot of hardships in obtaining a visitor's visa to UK. When a Sri Lankan applies for a Visa, the first question that is put to him is whether he is a Sinhalese or a Tamil. Even though the BBC has been announcing that holiday-makers and students will have no problems in obtaining visas to UK, they too have difficulties in getting one. When the Tamils apply for a visa even with the necessary documents, viz. (i) leave certificate, (ii) Return Tickets, (iii) Re-entry Permit, (iv) Evidence of funds in the UK, they are told that their papers have to be sent to the Home Office for clearance and asked to call in three weeks later.

I wish to point out a special case of Dr Nadarajah, who has enough funds and whose kidneys have been seriously affected and in a critical condition and needed treatment abroad as his case could not be treated in Nigeria. His Ministry did everything on their part in one day and even the Return Tickets were ready. The British High Commission Office in Kaduna refused to deviate from the practice of sending papers to Home Office for clearance before issuing a Visa. This they did despite the State Governor's request and the Commissioner for Health interviewing Officers of the British High Commission.

I fully trust that you will take up this matter immediately with the Home Office and thus help the Sri Lankan Tamils who are anxiously awaiting to go on leave and who have the necessary documents to prove that they are going on leave to spend their holiday in the UK.

Why this discrimination against the unfortunate Sri Lankan Tamils?

V. Tharmasangari

P.O. Box 2834,
Nigeria.

JUNIUS & RUTNAM

I was interested to read that President J.R. Jayawardene was the chief guest at the felicitation dinner to congratulate the distinguished Sri Lankan scholar and historian, Dr James T. Rutnam, on his 80th birthday.

Some of the most distinguished men and women of Sri Lanka were present at his dinner, but only the President was fortunate enough to have his picture taken arm-in-arm with Dr Rutnam and published in most of our newspapers.

I still recall that one of Dr Rutnam's most scholarly pieces of historical research was into President Jayawardene's family tree, (Reproduced in Tamil Times, June 1985). It caused quite a stir at the time and was frequently reproduced in newspapers and at election meetings.

President Jayawardene is fond of telling us how big a contribution his ancestors – especially his father and uncles — have made to Sri Lanka. A special museum is to be started at Dharmapala Mawatha as a permanent memorial to the Jayawardene family, which also has the honour of having Sri Lanka's new capital named after them.

I hope President Jayawardene will not forget to include Dr Rutnam's splendid piece of historical research in his museum.

Nihal Goonetilleke

Sri Jayawardenepura

'TAMILS ARE UNDER THREAT' — UK MPs

'We do feel, however, that the Tamil minority is under threat. Certainly, the Tamils, of all classes and from all parts of the country, believe that to be the case,' state two British Members of Parliament who visited Sri Lanka recently.

The two MPs, Mr Roger Sims (Conservative) and Mr Robert Kilroy Silk (Labour) have compiled a 20-page report on behalf of the British Parliamentary Human Rights group after a two-week fact-finding mission to Sri Lanka to examine allegations of human rights violations.

In their report, the MPs came to the conclusion that: 'We are in no doubt that in the present situation human rights are being violated or infringed to a substantial extent.

The following are some extracts from the Report:

'There is a considerable body of evidence that the army kills innocent civilians. An ill-disciplined Sinhalese army unit finding one of its own lorries and some of its own number literally blown to bits tends to assume that the inhabitants of the nearby village are responsible and takes revenge into its own hands.'

Torture

'First, it was clear to us all that the prisoners were cowed and afraid. It was also clear that very many — if not all of them — had been ill-treated. The torture — which seemed to take the form of beating, mainly on the buttocks with plastic pipes (we saw the terrible scars that such a beating leaves), being hung by the feet over a chilli fire, having pins pushed down fingernails and lighted cigarettes snubbed out on the body — appears to be mainly carried out by the police at the point of arrest. For fear of impli-

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 18

ST MATHEW

I have never admired Mr Cyril Mathew. But three public statements that he has made after President Jayawardene removed him from office are refreshingly frank.

(1) His statement that, once out of office, one has no friends;

(2) His admission that 'over 90 per cent' of the appointments he made while he was a Minister were 'political appointments'; and

(3) His revelation that, in the case of an official he did not like, he gave the order: 'Hold an inquiry and get rid of the fellow.'

Mr Mathew's former Cabinet colleagues have been doing what Mr Mathew says he did. But none of them has the frankness to say so publicly So, while Mr Mathew won't get my vote, he still gets my thanks.

P. Ekneligoda

Passara

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Israel, without Arabs.'

And there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries.' Transfer all of them, not one village or tribe shall remain.'

Ben Gurion, first Israeli Prime Minister: 'We must do everything to ensure they never do return . . .'

Golda Meir, a former Israeli Prime Minister: 'There is no such thing as Palestinians. It wasn't as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist.'

Menachem Begin, a former Prime Minister in the Knesset in 1955: 'I deeply believe in launching a preventive war against the Arab states without further hesitation. By doing so, we will achieve two targets — firstly, the annihilation of Arab power and secondly, the expansion of Territory.'

General Ariel Sharon in 1973: 'Israel is now a superpower and all the forces of European countries are weaker than we are. We can conquer in one week the area from Khartoum to Baghdad and Algeria.'

S. Shanthi,

Colombo,

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GRUESOME MASSACRE OF TAMIL CIVILIANS

May 12, 1985

Kodikamam attacked: Armed forces went on the rampage at Kodikamam today. A young woman was shot dead and several innocent civilians sustained gunshot injuries. Among those admitted to Jaffna Hospital for treatment are V. Vimalanathan of Sangathathanai, aged 30 years, P. Bhaheerathan of Madduvil, aged 20 years, and S. Saravanabhavan, aged 19 years of Nunavil. Several houses and shops were also smashed up.

MAY 13, 1985

Pregnant woman raped: Armed forces said to be involved in combing out operations in the village of Nayanmarkaddu in the North, brutally raped a 6-months pregnant mother (25 years) who already had two children, 4 years and 11 months old respectively. The woman was admitted to Jaffna hospital in a state of shock.

MAY 15, 1985

Tamils killed at Anuradhapura: Following a lightning raid on Sinhalese civilians by armed gunmen at Anuradhapura, several innocent Tamil civilians employed in government service at Anuradhapura were reported to have been massacred by the armed forces today. Mr Thangarajah, the Station Master of the Anuradhapura Railway Station was killed. Other Tamil employees attached to the railway station, Sivathasan, Kanagaratnam, Velupillai, Somasunderam and Rajadurai were also killed. Mr Selvarajah, Station Master attached to the nearby Madawachchiya railway station was also killed.

33 hacked to death, 30 injured by navy men in Nainativu Sea:
A passenger boat plying between the island of Delft and Kurikadduvan was attacked by several men, identified as Naval personnel in civils, resulting in the death of 33 civilians. At least 30 were reported injured. The engine boat, 'Kumudini', commenced its journey from Delft after the usual Naval inspections around 8.30 a.m. When it was cruising past the island of Nainativu, it was accosted by two fibre-glass boats. The men in the fibre-glass boats crossed over to 'Kumudini'. Though they carried guns, they also had in their possession lethal weapons like knives, iron bars and hand axes. They then set upon the passengers — men, women and children, hacking, clubbing and ripping them to death and destruction.

Several with grievous injuries are said to have been thrown into the sea by the attackers. The attackers left leaving the ravaged boat in the seas. A co-operative society boat which spotted the ill-fated 'Kumudini' towed it along to the Nainativu pier where after getting permission from the Naval personnel stationed there, proceeded to tow it along to Kurikadduvan. The dead bodies of 32 people were received by the mortuary at Pungudutivu Hospital, while the injured were despatched to Jaffna Hospital. The following were admitted to Jaffna Hospital: Pathinather Yogan (14 years), Bhuvanendran (35 years, Pungudu Tiva), Sathasivam (34 years, Kayts), Ganeshapillai (35 years Delft), V. Sivapathasunderam (35 years, Myliddy), M. Muththan, (42 years, Irupiddy), A. Kumaraswamy (50 years, Delft), K. Santhalingam (28 years, Delft), Dharmaratnam (48 years), Delft), Mrs Mohandurai Saroja (32 years, Delft), Mrs Anthony Parvathipillai (50 years, Malithurai), Kumaradasan (Pungudutivu), Kumar (15 years, Delft), S. Duraisingam (11 years, Delft), Chandrakumar (10 years, Delft), Mr K. Kanagambigai (45 years, Delft).

A three-year-old girl from Koddady, Shashikala Thanabalasingam, who was also hacked by the soldiers, died on admission to the Jaffna Hospital. The following dead bodies have been identified so far: P. Nagendram (32 years, Delft), M. Manivannan (15 years, Delft), I. Sinniah (35 years, Guru Nagar), Mrs A. Kusalakumari (28 years, Vadaliaddaipu), Mrs A. Anushooya (23 years, Pandateripppu), Miss P. Nimili (18 years), Mrs P. Mariamma (38 years), P. Yogarajah, Mrs Nirmaladevi Pasupathi (20 years), K. Sathasivam (62 years), Mrs P. Sornamma, Sadaiyar Govindan (44 years), G. Devasagayampillai (42 years), S. Thillainathan (38 years, Kayts), I. Kanagalingam (34 years), S. Anthonypillai (45 years), N. Kandiah (44 years), Sinnavan Anthony (65 years), S. Jesudasan (46 years, Jaffna).

MAY 17, 1985

Sought refuge and were shot: Tamil government servants employed at Anuradhapura who had sought refuge at an army camp due to the state of tension and anti-Tamil feelings prevalent in the area, were shot at by a Corporal, resulting in the death of six and injuries to 20 others.

Corpses washed ashore: Mutilated and decomposed corpses have been washed ashore in many islands around Nainativu. The bodies, which are beyond identification, are believed to be of those who were attacked and thrown overboard into the sea in the Nainativu boat massacre.

MAY 18, 1985

Tamil students assaulted, arrested: Fourteen innocent Tamil students who were undergoing training to become surveyors were mercilessly assaulted at Diyatalwa in the central province by soldiers. They were then handed over to the Bandarawela Police Station and remanded.

CWC reports 7 killings: Mr S. Sellasamy, General Secretary of the Ceylon Workers' Congress (a unit of the government group in Parliament), has reported to the Ministry of Defence that seven innocent Tamil workers of Indian descent were shot and killed by the soldiers at Vavuniya three days ago.

MAY 19, 1985

Army ramage at Gurunagar: Troops went on the rampage at Gurunagar, killing one innocent civilian and injuring five others, including a woman. The troops had opened fire on a private van bringing passengers back from a funeral. Anton Govindan, 44 years of Gurunagar, died on the spot. Mrs Subbalakshmi (25 years, of Colombothurai), Veerasingam (Eachamoddai), Venugopal, Raveendrarajah and Mariachandaran were admitted to Hospital with gunshot injuries.

Upcountry youth killed in Jaffna: An innocent Tamil youth, Kandiah Muthurajah (24 years) from Matale who was in Jaffna was shot and killed by the troops. Another Tamil civilian

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who was also shot dead in the same incident has not been identified.

MAY 21, 1985

More shootings at Gurunagar: There was more shootings by the troops at Gurunagar today. An innocent Tamil civilian was killed and another civilian, a father of seven children, was grievously hurt. Several civilians, including many women, were taken away by the troops. Their fate is unknown.

Tamil people should defend themselves – government minister: Speaking at a literary meeting in Colombo, Mr S. Thondaman, Minister of Rural Industrial Development, said that Tamil people have come to a stage today when they should defend themselves, their lives and property. They could no longer depend on 'others' for their protection.

27,000 civilians under eviction order: 27,012 Tamil civilians from 5,500 farming families living in the Chettikulum area have been issued eviction orders from homes owned by them. The decision made by the military high command of the North of Ceylon was conveyed to the people by vehicles fitted with a public address system. It is understood that the army had also demanded the closure of a Government Hospital and the Assistant Government Agent's office in Chettikulam.

Four Tamil youth missing: Four Tamil youths who had returned home from Saudi Arabia, where they were employed, are reported missing. After disembarking at the Colombo International Airport they had hired a car and proceeded to Jaffna, but had never reached their destination. It is believed that on the way to Jaffna they might have had a fatal rendezvous with the soldiers of the government of Sri Lanka.

'Siva' of BBC TV fame on the mat: Mr Sivapalan, President of the Trincomalee Citizens' Committee, who appeared in a recent TV feature programme telecast over the BBC and exposed army atrocities and who had his son killed subsequently by the troops, was quizzed by the Criminal Investigation Department sleuths, for allegedly leaking information to the foreign press about an army massacre of 40 Tamil youths at Trincomalee. Another son of Mr Sivapalan, it must be recalled, was killed in Colombo during the July 1983 genocide.

MAY 23, 1985

'Monks also terrorists' says Sarath: The Communist MP for Kalawana, Mr Sarath Mulletuwegama, said in Parliament today that going by the President's statement that anyone who opposed the Government was a terrorist, quite a lot of people in the country including himself were terrorists. The Buddhist monks who were conducting a protest sit-in outside Parliament at that very moment were also terrorists! He went on to say that Tamil people were entitled to all the rights enjoyed by the Sinhalese people. The ethnic crisis could only be solved by granting the Tamil people the right of self-determination of the highest order. It must be recalled that it was only a few weeks ago that Sarath clashed in Parliament with Government MPs for calling the Tamil liberation fighters terrorists. He had said that he preferred to call them Tamil militants and NOT terrorists.

President threatens martial law: Speaking at a meeting of the government parliamentary group, President Jayawardene threatened to declare martial law if necessary to wipe out terrorism. He said that he was thinking in terms of granting full executive powers to MPs in their electorates.

MAY 24, 1985

Family wiped out by army: The army wiped out an entire family at Pankulam in the Trincomalee District. A mother, daughter, son-in-law, two babies, an old woman, a servant girl and a neighbour were wiped out in a brutal masacre. Mr K. Thamotheram, the breadwinner of the family, who was away from the home at the time the incident occurred, was the only survivor of the attack.

MAY 29, 1985

Buses stoned at Sinhalese town: Several private coaches plying from Colombo to Jaffna were subject to stone-throwing at the Sinhalese border town of Anuradjapura, resulting in serious damage to the buses and injuries to passengers.

VVT massacre – citizens committee submits details: The Valvettithurai citizens committee has submitted to the Defence Ministry the names of the 70 Tamil children massacred inside a community centre on May 9th at Valvettithurai. They have also furnished the Defence Ministry with details of the murders, robberies, acts of arson and rape, which the army indulged in. The government had earlier denied these incidents.

MAY 30, 1985

House blasted at Ariyalai: The armed forces dynamited and destroyed a house at Ariyalai today. They had come to search the house and on finding it unoccupied had proceeded to destroy the house.

More stone-throwing: The Sinhalese 'stone brigades' continued their operations at Anuradhapura, pelting with stones any vehicle that proceeded in the direction of Jaffna. Several vehicles were damaged and many sustained head injuries.

40 houses set on fire: Forty houses belonging to innocent Tamil civilians were set on fire at Sri Nagar, a village in the Mutur area in the Eastern Province, by the security forces.

JUNE 2, 1985

Mannampitiya – 34 Tamils missing: A Tamil United Liberation Front spokesman, Mr Sampandamoorthy, has complained to the Trincomalee District Minister that 34 Tamils residing at Mannampitiya, a Sinhalese village with a majority Sinhalese population, have been missing for the last few days. As a result of the panic generated by the strange disappearance of these Tamils, 113 Tamil ladies living in the village had sought refuge at Batticaloa. At Kiliveddi, 15 innocent Tamils including two young girls have disappeared. As a result, people in the area have left the village and sought refuge at a Muslim school at Jinnah Nagar.

Stone brigade at Kekirawa too: The Sinhalese stone brigades extended their activities at Anuradhapura to Kekirawa, stoning any vehicle that left in the direction of Jaffna. Several vehicles were damaged and many injured.

JUNE 3, 1985

Army ramage at Trincomalee: 13 killed: The armed forces went on the ramage at Trincomalee killing at least 13 civilians and injuring several; others who were travelling in a bus. Of the 13 bodies at the mortuary at Trincomalee Hospital, six have been identified: S. Dharmapalan, Post Master of Pankulam, Miss Parameswary Kumarasamy, (51 years, retired teacher), K. Vallipuranathan, retired teacher, S. Subramaniam, employed at the National Housing Department office at Trincomalee, Mrs Parameswary Sivananthan and her mother Iyamuthu. The following have been admitted to the Trincomalee Hospital with gunshot injuries: Mrs Rajeswari, Mr Murugesu, Mr Velum Mylum, Mrs Rajamani, Mr V. Selvarajah, Mr V. Anandarajah, Mrs A. Selvanayagi, Mrs V. Rajeswari and her 3-month-old baby boy.

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A TRUE SCHOLAR

By Prof. K. Indrapala

James Thevathasan Rutnam turns eighty today. The four score years of his life so far span an important period in the history of modern Sri Lanka — an epoch beset by changes more radical, more rapid and, towards the end, more painful, than in any preceding age in recent centuries. He was born at a time when Pax Britannica was reigning supreme and British rule in this tropical island seemed unshakable. The background against which he grew up could hardly have been more stable. Then came the changes. And today, as he begins his ninth decade, the land he loved is in turmoil and slipping inexorably towards the abyss of civil strife. Having raised his voice against the British as a mere lad and later associated himself with political organisations and leaders with a desire to lead the country out of bondage, he must indeed be a sad man today.

James failed to make a name in politics. From the beginning he was torn between politics and scholarship, and gradually opted for a career in politics. When he finally gave it up, the loss to politics was scholarship's gain. Looking back, one wishes he devoted more time and energy for scholarship. He perhaps has no regrets.

Favourable maxim

Whatever one's chosen area of interest is, one eventually gravitates to history is a favourable maxim that James always publicises. His own enduring interests in history were not a late development but were first formed while he was at the Ceylon University College and the Law College. It was at the latter institution that his inclination for historical research first won recognition, when he was awarded the Walter Perera Memorial Prize for Legal Research for his monograph on the introduction of trial by jury in Sri Lanka. It was his first important piece of historical research and, I believe, it was from that time that he became interested in the life and work of Alexander Johnston, the papers relating to whom are among the most valuable collections that James had acquired over many years from different parts of the world.

In the early years James had a passion for genealogical studies and soon became a specialist in the field and was sought after by many to trace their family trees.

Genealogy naturally led him to biography. He regularly wrote biographical sketches of leading political personalities and colonial administrators to the local press and became an authority on the lives of national leaders. Among his best contributions in this field is undoubtedly the well-written biography of his political mentor, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, on the occasion of the latter's birth centenary celebrations in 1953. It was published in English, Sinhalese and Tamil by the government. His researches into the life of Arunachalam led him to unravel the work of William Digby, Arunachalam's mentor, and to the acquisition of the valuable Digby Papers.

Modern history has been his forte. But he is not one who favours narrow specialisation and has shown as much zeal for the medieval and ancient history of Sri Lanka as for the modern. His writings on Fraser of Trinity College, the Polonnaruwa Colossus and the Tomb of Elara clearly reveal that he is equally at home in all the periods of the island's history.

He worked in isolation and never knew his real worth. Recognition eluded him for a long time. When he reached the age of seventy, he had written himself as a 'successful failure'. Little did he realise that he was entering a new stage in his life — that of a guru figure. Recognition followed He was elected President of the Jaffna Archaeological Society, a Member of the Governing Council of the Royal Asiatic Society (S.L.B.) a Faculty Member of the University campus in Jaffna, and later a Member of the Council of the University of Jaffna. And that new university honoured him with a D.Litt. degree at his first convocation.

Time running out

But when all this came, James was not going to rest on his laurels. He busied himself with the establishment of the Evelyn Rutnam Institute for Intercultural Studies in Jaffna, a dream that was his ever since the sudden death of his beloved wife, and began his long-awaited work on the Alexander Johnston Papers. He felt that time was running out and ploughed through the papers with the eagerness of a student working for a Ph.D. in a place plagued by frequent power cuts. It was an amazing sight to see him flashing a torch with his trembling right hand on to a document held in the other and reading late into the inght when men of his age were enjoying a good night's sleep after playing with their great-grandchildren. But alas for nearly a year now, his cherished work has been cruelly interrupted by the developments in Jaffna.

Thorough in his investigation, critical in his approach and dedicated to his research, James is a master of words which he puts together very elegantly. A scholar of true universality, his intellectual personality is perfectly imaged in his fluent style. On this day of remarkable achievement, James Rutnam deserves to be saluted in Shakespearean phrase: **Thou art a scholar.**

FROM PAGE 15

cating certain honourable individuals or causing retribution to those in captivity, we do not intend to specify the source of our evidence.

Suffice to say that we have no doubt that interrogation, wherever it takes place but especially at the time of arrest, is almost invariably accompanied by some form of ill-treatment. It appears to be the case that the more likely the person arrested was to be a terrorist, the more severe the torture.'

Innocent in detention

'Again, it would seem that a large proportion of those detained are innocent. That, at any rate, was the inescapable conclusion we drew from the documented evidence that was made available to us.

'We accept that the government has to arrest terrorist suspects. We acknowledge the need for them to be detained and interrogated. What is inexcusable is for them to be beaten and for those known to be innocent to be held for a day longer than is necessary. For this is the norm rather than the exception. There should be no need, for example, for the 16 year old girl who was requested to report to the police station to give an account of why she was attending classes outside school on 'revolutionary' subjects like the emancipation of women and the ending of the dowry system, and who was taken to the police station by her mother, father and brother, to be imprisoned for over three hours — even though the Advisory Board acknowledged that she was innocent of any terrorist activity and recommended her release.'

'Nor does it seem to us to be necesary to prevent the prisoners receiving their relatives and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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Quotable quotes

● *Regrettably, in the recent past, there has been much big talk against India by puny minds in the United National Party Government led by President Jayawardene. Now, they too have come to the view that India is a friend, a true friend, not an enemy, who is trying to help Sri Lanka out through a dangerous impasse of its own creation.*

— Editorial, Saturday Review: 29.6.85

● *Communalism has been introduced into everything and everywhere in Sri Lanka. Will this situation change? A Police Inspector in the Eastern Province has referred to me as 'Lokku Kottiya' (Big Tiger). If my plight is this, is there a need to comment on the plight of other Tamils.'*

— Mr K.W. Devanayakam, Sri Lankan Minister of Home Affairs in an interview with 'Virakesavi'

● *All newspapers in Sri Lanka publish lies.*

— ex-Cabinet Minister Cyril Mathew, Island: 25.6.85

● *When a man reaches the top, he has no friends. Great men are always bad men.*

— Cyril Mathew, Island: 1.6.85

● *The absolute immunity (of criminal or civil liability) of the President (of Sri Lanka) may conceptually be inconsistent with the principles of democracy and sovereignity of the people, but it is not for a court of law to question the validity of any provisions of the constitution .*

— Chief Justice Sharvanda, Island: 9.7.85

● *Last year the general view was that if you get a political solution, terrorism will wither. Today, the view is that to get a political solution, we must work towards a cessation of hostilities.*

— Lalith Athulathmudali, Minister of National Security, Island, 3.6.85

● *There is a dearth of straightforward national minded and devoted (Buddhist) Bhikkus today.*

— Ven. Marapana Vijitha Thero, Island: 5.6.85

● *In the past, Sinhala kings brought their brides from South India and their advisers on law, economics and finances were mostly Tamils. During the last days of the Sinhala Kingdom, a 19-year-old Tamil Prince named Kandasamy became the King of Kandy as Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe.*

— Anandatissa de Alwis, Sri Lankan Minister of State, Island: 23.6.85

● *The Tamil United Liberation Front must abdicate its assumed note as the legitimate representatives of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka.*

— Eelam National Liberation Front, The Hindu: 29.6.85

● *I am inviting you to come and see the Tamil youth who have been tortured in the Tamil ward at the Welikade prison. The scars are still on their bodies and you can find out from them how their statements were obtained.*

— Rev. Fr Singarayer to the Judge of the High Court of Colombo, Island: 12.7.85

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OBITUARY

Prof. E.F.C. Ludowyk

On June 10th, at Golders Green, London, gathered scholars and friends to pay a final tribute to E.F.C. Ludowyk. Born in Galle in 1906, he graduated in 1929 from University College with a First. On a government scholarship at Cambridge he received a First at the Tripos and, later, his Doctorate.

The young scholar who had also trod the stage of the University Marlowe Society returned to University College as Lecturer and four years later unfurled his own long reign. The first Ceylonese to take the English Chair, his sails brought with them the new winds which to us at school was so refreshingly felt in the radical teaching signalled by 'Marginal Comments': English was the enjoyable 'living experience' of the beauty and power of language which is literature.

The impression conveyed by the spoken word in his lectures and tutorials which is more powerful than that received from his written is that of a mind of high order which, for some reason still to be examined and explained, chose only to be the teacher who brings the intelligence of the country abreast that of England. Had he as an independent mind chosen to face his peers more than his students we may have seen a truer image in a written work of great originality the magnitude of his intellect which could have borne comparison with any in English Letters in his time.

His 'Understanding Shakespeare', for example, meant though it is for schools as intro — and companion to the six plays he edited and annotated, is a supreme example of authoritative scholarship borne lightly.

This interest in teaching and in his students naturally progressed with the aim of advancing the country's first institute of higher learning. He became also the first Ceylonese Dean of the Arts Faculty in 1940 and the College, which had blossomed into a university in 1942. These years now assume a golden glow. The university was a university: a microcosm of equal minds, a focal point for the intelligence of the whole country with the promise of an international perspective and place.

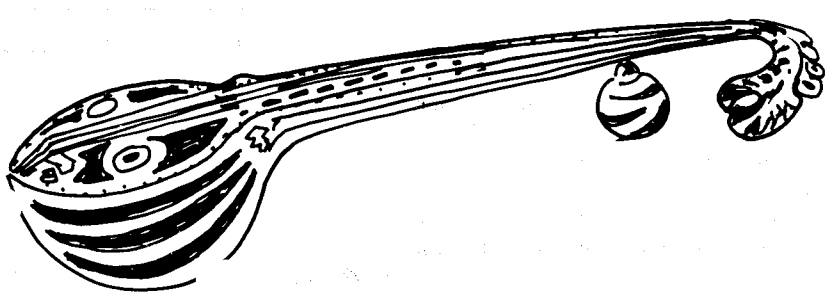
The writer, it had been said, is the barometer of his age registering in advance the approaching storms and stress. It was not want of sympathy with the new aspirations which decided his passage to England in 1956. He may have sensed then what has now come to pass: the irrationality of the present.

They may no longer 'come from Jaffna' and he himself was to leave the university and country one of whose leading teachers, academics and scholars he had been: our fairest prospect, the Ludowyk sensibility and outlook, faded as with his wife they sailed westwards.

To his wife, however, who knew in her experience since enforced exile from home in Hungary in 1919 the tragic travails of Europe, this return was yet another labour of wandering all of which she has faced with courage and dignity. A formidable mind and personality she was however sensed by those who understood her and her analytic attitidue as being ever so kind and gentle.

Dedicated to the first refugee our youth had known, friend, and fellow. Haffner, these words for an inspiring Teacher cannot end better than with those of Dr Johnson which a contributor to the felicitation volume honouring Professor Ludowyk says he read with geat depth of feeling during one of his lectures: *'To pacify the inimical, to soften the obdurate, to mollify the resentful are worthy of a statesman but it can afford little cause for self-applause to consider that where there was formerly an insurrection there is now a wilderness.*

N.S.



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FROM PAGE 18

friends. That they are some 200 very difficult miles away may mean that such visits would, in any case, be infrequent, though that is a case for locating the camp in a more accessible place.'

'We should also say that it was alleged to us that relatives could only obtain for burial the body of someone killed by the police or army in the North if they first signed a form to say that their relative was a terrorist. This served, it was put to us, as an ex post facto legitimation of the action of the army in killing the person.'

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Brothers seek suitable bridegroom for Hindu Tamil lady doctor, 30 years, working in Britain. Please send details and horoscope. Box M39 c/o Tamil Times.

Mother seeks suitable bride for graduate accountant son in his thirties, permanent resident in Britain. Doctor or professional preferred. Please send horoscope and other particulars. Box M40 c/o Tamil Times.

Parent seeks Hindu professional groom for daughter aged 29 from Valvettiturai, professionally qualified engineer, now government servant in Australia. Box M41 c/o Tamil Times.

OBITUARY

Dr K. RAJAGOPAL

Dr Krishnapillai Rajagopal, MBBS (Ceylon), a General Practitioner of Enfield, Middlesex, died suddenly on June 3, 1985.

Born in Kokkuvil, Jaffna, in Sri Lanka in November 1936, he was educated at Kokkuvil Hindu College and later at Jaffna Central College. He graduated from the Ceylon Medical College in 1964. Having served in various capacities, including community and chest medicine, Rajagopal left Sri Lanka in 1974 for the UK having won a scholarship.

Although he intended to return to Sri Lanka, due to the unstable conditions there Rajagopal decided to stay in the UK. Having undergone training in general practice, he became a single-handed General Practitioner with his own practice in Enfield. He also worked for the DHSS as a member of the Enfield and Haringey Local Medical Committee. Rajagopal was well known and very much liked by his colleagues.

Known to his friends as Raja, he was a man of wit and energy. He has helped many worthwhile causes, one of which is the League of Friends of the University of Jaffna. He will be dearly missed by his many friends.

Rajagopal leaves his wife Selvaranee and two children who are pursuing higher education.

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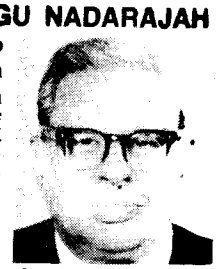
Shangita Namasivayam, a talented dancer from the Kalakshetra College of fine arts, Madras, delighted an appreciative audience of art lovers by her scintillating performance of Bharatha Natyam at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, London W14, recently.

Dr K. Rajagopal: Wife Selvarani and children wish to thank relatives and friends for their floral tributes, messages of sympathy and who helped in other ways on the sad loss of their loving husband and father.

DR VEERAVAGU NADARAJAH



We regret to announce the death of Dr V. Nadarajah formerly Chief Medical Officer of Health, Colombo Municipality, on Monday 15th July. He is the son of late Veeravagu, Notary, husband of Rupavathy, brother of late Mrs Saraswathi Sambanthan, Justice Sivasubramaniam, late Navaratnarajah, Mrs Meena Vythilingam, Kandasamy, Dr Rajadurai, father of Dr Manoharan, Nirmala, Shamala and Dr Aruna, father-in-law of Indrani, late Dr Puvan Eswaran (Malaysia), Dr Vijendra (Eastbourne, UK) and Perumal (Dubai). Funeral took place in Colombo on Wednesday 17th July.

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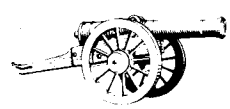

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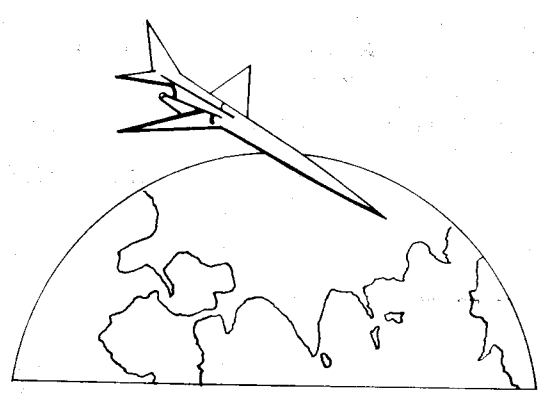

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